

Message Text

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PAGE 01 VIENNA 02453 141941Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02
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R 141635Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY VIENNA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5565
INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
USMISSION GENEVA
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

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E.O. 11652:N/A
TAGS: XF, IS, AU
SUBJECT: ATTITUDE OF AUSTRIAN CHANCELLOR AND FOREIGN
MINISTER TOWARD LATEST PLO TERRORIST ACT

1. BOTH CHANCELLOR KREISKY AND FOREIGN MINISTER PAHR HAVE
COMMENTED ON MARCH 11 TERRORIST ACTION IN ISRAEL IN
MANNER THAT HAS GENERATED NEGATIVE REACTION IN SOME
AUSTRIAN QUARTERS.

2. KREISKY, WHEN ASKED FOR COMMENT ON MARCH 12, SAID
THAT INNOCENT VICTIMS OF TERRORISTS DESERVE COMPASSION,
BUT IT SHOULD NOT BE OVERLOOKED THAT THEY ARE VICTIMS
OF A "SHORTSIGHTED" POLICY. HE SAID HE COULD NOT HELP
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PAGE 02 VIENNA 02453 141941Z

POINTING OUT THAT WHEN THE VERY EXISTENCE OF THE
PALESTINIANS IS BEING DENIED, THE PALESTINIANS IN TURN
TRY TO GAIN ATTENTION IN SUCH A HORRIBLE MANNER. HE
ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT TERRORISM IS OF LESS USE TO THE
PALESTINIANS' CAUSE THAN POLITICAL STRUGGLE PURSUED IN
RECENT YEARS.

3. ON MARCH 13, KREISKY TOLD "DIE PRESSE" (VIENNA'S MOST PRESTIGIOUS NEWSPAPER) THAT AUSTRIA WOULD NOT CONSIDER CLOSING THE PLO OFFICE IN VIENNA (ACCREDITED TO UNIDO) AS ISRAEL HAD REPORTEDLY SUGGESTED TO ALL COUNTRIES HAVING PLO MISSIONS. "IT IS NOT WITHIN THE POWERS OF THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT TO DEMAND SUCH AN ACTION OF AUSTRIA," KREISKY REPORTEDLY REPLIED, ALONG WITH THE ASSERTION THAT "ISRAEL COULD HAVE SPARED ITSELF AND THE WORLD MUCH TROUBLE IF IT HAD TAKEN A MORE POSITIVE ATTITUDE TOWARD THE INITIATIVE OF EGYPTIAN PRESIDENT SADAT."

4. VIENNA PAPERS OF MARCH 13 REPORTED THAT FONMIN PAHR HAD SAID VIRTUALLY SAME THING WHEN QUESTIONED BY PRESS DURING COURSE OF VISIT TO KUWAIT, BUT IN MANNER THAT EMPHASIZED ALLEGED ISRAELI CULPABILITY. PAHR REPORTEDLY SAID THE TERROR ACTION WAS BUT AN OUTGROWTH OF ISRAEL'S POLICY TOWARD THE PALESTINIANS WHO ARE BEING DENIED RIGHT OF SELF-DETERMINATION. HE THEN ADDED THAT TERRORISM COULD NOT CONTRIBUTE TO SETTLEMENT OF MIDEAST CONFLICT. "DIE PRESSE" CALLED PAHR'S REMARKS SHOCKING, IF TRUE, AND PEOPLE'S PARTY MP AND HUMAN RIGHTS SPECIALIST FELIX ERMACORA CALLED IT A BLATANT MISTAKE THUS TO APPEAR TO BLAME ISRAEL FOR THE MASSACRE.

5. PAPERS ON MARCH 14 REPORTED A LATER, MORE "NUANCED" LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 VIENNA 02453 141941Z

STATEMENT BY PAHR AT ABU DHABI TO EFFECT THAT TERRORISM WAS NEITHER CONDUCIVE TO THE PALESTINIANS' CAUSE NOR A SUITABLE MEANS OF BRINGING PROBLEM OF THEIR RIGHTS TO A BREAKTHROUGH. PAHR WAS REPORTED ALSO TO HAVE AGAIN VOICED HIS DISAPPOINTMENT AT ABSENCE OF ISRAELI EFFORT TO MEET SADAT HALFWAY AND TO HAVE WARNED OF POSSIBLE FAILURE OF SADAT'S PEACE INITIATIVE. IN CASE OF ITS FAILURE, PAHR IS SAID TO HAVE RECOMMENDED RECONVENING GENEVA MIDDLE EAST CONFERENCE WHILE AT SAME TIME NOTING THAT AUSTRIA WAS SUPPORTING PARTICIPATION OF SOVIET UNION IN MIDDLE EAST NEGOTIATIONS BECAUSE MOSCOW "COULD INFLUENCE THE UNITED STATES IN THE QUEST FOR A SUITABLE SOLUTION."

6. COMMENT: IF PAHR'S COMMENTS HAVE BEEN ACCURATELY REPORTED, THEY ARE PREDICTABLE OUTGROWTH OF KREISKY'S EARLIER DETERMINATION TO COME DOWN SO STRONGLY ON SADAT'S SIDE OF SADAT/BEGIN IMPASSE. THE COMMENTS ARE SO ILL-CONCEIVED, HOWEVER, HAT WE HAVE ASKED MFA TO PROVIDE US WITH TRANSCRIPT IN ORDER TO DETERMINE WHETHER WE SHOULD REGISTER OUR DISPLEASURE WITH GOA. WOLF

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